

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BERLIN 5182

LIMDIS

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, GE, GW
SUBJECT: FRG/GDR RELATIONS: VIEWS OF FRG PERMANENT MISSION CHIEF

REF: BERLIN 5077; USBERLIN AIRGRAM 020

SUMMARY

FRG PERMREP GAUS JANUARY 24 GAVE A PESSIMISTIC APPRAISAL OF THE NEAR TERM STATE OF FRG/GDR RELATIONS. HE IS DISTURBED BY THE SWITCH IN EAST GERMAN MEDIA TREATMENT OF THE PER REP'S ACTIVITIES WHICH HAS GONE FROM THE PARTICULAR TO THE GENERAL. HE THINKS PROGRESS IN THE HUMANTAIRAIN FIELD IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY, BUT THINKS THERE CONCEIVABLY COULD BE MOVEMENT ON A BORDER TREATY. ON THE GDR DOMESTIC SCENE, GAUS THINKS THE LEADERSHIP IS REACTING WITH "OVERKILL" TO ITS PROBLEMS, WHICH ARE NOWHERE NEAR A CRISIS STAGE." END SUMMARY

1. AT LUNCH WITH CHARGE JANUARY 24, FRG PERMREP CHIF GAUS GAVE A PESSIMISTIC PICTURE OF THE CURRENT AND CONFIDENTIAL

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NEAR FUTURE STAE OFFRG/GDR RELATIONS, CITING SOME HISTORICAL BACKGROUND WHICH HE THINKS HAS REVELENCE FOR THE CURRENT STATE OF RELATIONS. HIS PESSIMISM WAS NOT LESS DEEPT THAN HIS PREVIOUS BRIEF REMARKS (REFTEL).

2. GAUS SAID THAT WITHIN THE LAST WEEK THE NATURE OF THE EAST GERMAN MEDIA ATTACK AGAINST THE ACTIVIEIS OF

THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATION HAD CHANGED. EARLIER, GDR MEDIA HAD CRITICIZED THE PERMREP FOR VIOLATING PROVISION OF THE VIENNA CONVENTION OR THE FRG/GDR BASIC AGREEMENT IN ITS HANDLING OF HUMANITARIAN CASES AND RECEIVING OF GDR VISITORS. NOW, THE MEDIA WAS CLAIMING THAT THE PERMREP HAD NO RIGHT WHATSOEVER TO ENGAGE IN FAMILY REUNIFICATION MATTERS OR TO DISCUSS SUCH ISSUES WITH GDR CITIZENS. GDR ASSERTIONS THAT THE PERMREP HAS NO SUCH RIGHT GOES TO THE HEART OF THE PERMREP'S FUNCTIONS AND THEREFORE IS REGARDED AS A VERY SERIOUS MATTER BY BONN.

3. GAUS STRESSED THE PERMREP WAS DOING NOTHING IN ITS RECEIVING OF GDR VISITORS THAT VIOLATES THE VIENNA CONVENTION OR THE BASIC AGREEMENT, ABOUT 10,000 EAST GERMANS HAVE VISITED THE PERMREP SINCE IT OPENED. WHILE GAUS COULD NOT BE CERTAIN THAT ON NO OCCASION HAD A PERMREP OFFICER EITHER INTENTIONALLY OR UNINTENTIONALLY ENCOURAGED PEOPLE TO LEAVE THE GDR OR HAD GIVEN ADVICE ON HOW TO DO SO, HE SAID THAT AS GENERAL POLICY HIS STAFF WAS SCRUPULOUS IN AVOIDING SUCH ENCOURAGEMENT. FURTHERMORE, ACCORDING TO GAUS, HIS STAFF HAS NEVER ENCOURAGED GDR VISITORS TO TELL THEIR STORY/COMPLAINTS TO FRG MEDIA (GAUS DID NOT SAY SO, BUT APPARENTLY THIS WAS ONE OF THE CHARGES AGAINST THE PERMREP MADE BY THE MFA.)

4. IN GAUS' VIEW, THE JANUARY 11 ACCESS CONTROL MEASURES AGAINST THE PERMREP, WHICH HE SAID COULD BE REPEATED

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ANYTIME, WERE TO SERVE AS A WARNING TO BONN TO DO "SOMETHING" ON THE EMIGRATION QUESTION. ACCORDING TO GAUS, IN MAY 196, THE EAST GERMANS AT SEVERAL LEVELS HAD TOLD BONN THAT IT WOULD HAVE TO TAKE SOME STEPS TO DISCOURAGE PEOPLE FROM APPLYING TO LEAVE THE GDR, AND THAT EAST BERLIN WAS NO LONGER WILLING TO GO ALONG WITH EXISTING ARRANGMENTS. THE EAST GERMANS ADDED THEY WOULD DO NOTHING BEFORE THE ELECTIONS AND DID NOT EXPECT BONN TO DO SO EITHER, BUT THAT THEY WOULD EXPECT SOMETHING THEREAFTER.

5. THE ISSUE REMAINED "DEAD" IN BONN UNTIL THE JANUARY 11 GDR MEASURES. GAUS, SPEAKING PRIVATELY, SAID HE THOUGHT IT HAD BEEN A MISTAKE NOT TO REPLY IN SOME FASHION, EVEN IF ONLY TO TEMPORIZE, NOW BONN WOULD HAVE TO REPLY IN THE NEXT TWO WEEKS, ALTHOUGH IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO DO SO BECAUSE OF ALL THE PUBLICITY, ETC. SURROUNDING THE JANUARY 11 GDR ACTIONS. HE DID NOT INDICATE ANY REASON FOR THE TWO WEEK "DEADLINE". GAUS HOPED BONN COULD DO

SOMETHING WHICH WOULD HELP DEFUSE THE ISSUE, PROTECT FRG POSITION, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME MAKIN IT CLEAR TO EAST BERLIN THAT THE FRG CANNOT TAKE STEPS THAT WOULD LEAD EAST GERMANS TO THINK THEY SHOULD NOT APPLY TO EMIGRATE.

6. GAUS SPENT SOME TIME REVIEWING THE HISTORY AND PROCEDURES OF HOW THE TWO GERMANIES HANDLE THE MATTER OF EMIGRATION AS GACKGROUND FOR PART OF THE PERMREP'S CURRENT PROBLEMS. HE MADE THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN POLITICAL PRISONERS, WHO ARE BOUGHT OUT, ANDGDR CITIZENS WHO WISH TO LEAVE TO JOIN FAMILIES. IN THIS LATTER CATEGORY, THERE WERE THREE WASY IN WHICH BONN LEARNS OF PEOPLE WHO WISH TO EMIGRATE. FIRST, WEST GERMAN CITIZENS SEND LETTERS TO THE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE, ETC. INDICATING THEY HAVE FAMILY MEMBERS IN THE GDR WHOM THEY WOULD LIKE TO HAVE JOIN THEM. SECOND, EAST

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GERMANS WRITE DIRECTLY TO THE CHANCELLOR AND OTHER BONN OFFICES, ASKING HELP TO EMIGRAT. THIRD, SINCE THE OPENING OF THE PERMREP, EAST GERMANS WRITE OR COME TO THE PERMREP ASKING FOR INFORMATION AND ADVISE. ALL THESE NAMES ARE THEN PUT ON A LIST, ALONG WITH THE POLICIAL PRISONERS, WITH THE ACTUAL " NEGOTIATIONS" FOR WHO LEAVES

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BERLIN 5182

LIMDIS

THE GDR BEING CONDUCTED THROUGH PRIVATE LAWYER CHANNELS.

7. IN 1972, EGAN BAHR, AND SUBSEQUENTLY GAUS, HAD ARGUED THAT WHILE POLITICAL PRISONERS SHOULD BE HANDLED THROUGH PRIVATE LAWYER CHANNELS, GDR CITIZENS WHO WISHED TO LEAVE SHOULD BE HANDLED THROUGH OFFICIAL CHANNELS. THE PURPOSE OF USING OFFICIAL CHANNELS FOR EMIGRANT APPLICATIONS WOULD BE THAT BOTH GOVERNMENTS COULD THEN SAY CLEARLY WHAT THEY WERE PREPARED TO DO OR NOT DO AND UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES. THERE WERE PEOPLE IN BONN AND IN EAST BERLIN WHO FAVORED SUCH AN APPROACH, BUT THE DECISION ON BOTH SIDES WAS TO HANDLE BOTH CATEGORIES IN THE PRIVATE LAWYERS CHANNEL. THE SITUATION HAS REMAINED UNCHANGED UNTIL NOW, AND THUS PUTS THE WORK OF THE PERMREP IN THE HUMANITARIAN FIELD IN AN AWKWARD POSITION, PARTICULARLY AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE RECENT GDR ATTACKS.

8. WHILE THE GDR WANTS BONN TO DO " SOMETHING " TO REDUCE PRESSURES TO LEAVE, GAUS DID NOT THINK THE EAST GERMANS ARE HINTING THEY WOULD BE SATISFIED WITH MONEY TO BUY PEOPLE OUT. HE THINKS THE REGIME WANTS
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THE FRG TO TAKE A MUCH MORE RESTRICTIVE APPROACH ON THE LISTS OF PEOPLE BONN SUBMITS. IN OTHER WORDS, IT SHOULD SUBMIT LISTS ONLY OF PEOPLE WITH VERY CLOSE RATHER THAN DISTANT OR VIRTUALLY NON-EXISTENT FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS. FOR OBVIOUS DOMESTIC POLITICAL REASONS, BONN CANNOT DO SO. GAUS HOPES THE GDR CAN UNDERSTAND THIS, BUT IS NOT AT ALL OPTIMISTIC THAT IT DOES OR THAT THE REGIME WILL NOT MAKE FURTHER " MISTAKES " IN THIS MATTER. THEREFORE, HE EXPECTS NO PROGRESS OVER THE NEAR FUTURE IN THE HUMANITARIAN FIELD, THE 25 SMALL STEPS, OR THE LEGAL ASSISTANCE TREATY, AND BELIEVES THAT STAGNATION IN SUCH MATTERS IS REALLY A STEP-BACKWARDS IN FRG/GDR RELATIONS AND THE WEST GERMAN PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THESE RELATIONS.

9. ONE AREA WHERE GAUS THINKS PROGRESS MAY BE POSSIBLE IS AN FRG/GDR BORDER TREATY. MOST OF THE TECHNICAL WORK HAS BEEN DONE, ALTHOUGH DEFINING THE BORDER ALONG THE ELBE IN LOWER SAXONY REMAINS A PROBLEM. THE GDR IS VERY INTERESTED IN A TREATY, FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS, AND SIGNED AT AN APPROPRIATELY HIGH POLITICAL LEVEL. THE FRG WOULD PREFER AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS BY THE CHIEFS OF THE TWO TECHNICAL BORDER DELEGATIONS. GAUS THINKS THAT

PERHAPS SOME COMPROMISE COULD BE FOUND BETWEEN THESE TWO POSITIONS. THE "TREATY" COULD BE THE CENTER PIECE OF A LARGE PACKAGE, BUT IF IT DOES NOT HAVE SOMETHING IN THE HUMANITARIAN FIELD, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO SELL TO THE WEST GERMAN PUBLIC.

10. ON A COUPLE OF SPECIFICS OF FRG/GDR RELATIONS, GAUS NOTED THAT THE WEST GERMAN TECHNICAL PHOTO EXHIBIT IN EAST BERLIN IS ENJOYING PHENOMENAL SUCCESS. ATTENDANCE IS AVERAGING 3,000 PERSONS DAILY, WITH 6,000 ON SUNDAY. THEY HAD EXPECTED ONLY SEVERAL HUNDRED A DAY. THIS, GAUS FEELS, IS TOO SUCCESSFUL IN TERMS OF FUTURE POSSIBILITIES FOR FRG CULTURAL EVENTS
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SINCE IT MAY CAUSE THE REGIME TO BE LESS WILLING TO AGREE TO OTHER PROGRAMS. ON A REPLACEMENT FOR TV CORRESPONDENT LOEWE, GAUS, IF ASKED, IS ADVISING THAT ARD TRY SOON TO ACCREDIT TWO PEOPLE BECAUSE THE GDR MAY BE MORE RECEPTIVE TO SUCH AN IDEA BEFORE BELGRADE THAN AFTER IT. HE AGREES THAT WHOEVER IS SELECTED WILL HAVE A DIFFICULT TIME BECAUSE WEST AS WELL AS EAST GERMAN VIEWERS WILL BE MAKING A COMPARISON WITH LOEWE.

11. ON THE GDR DOMESTIC SCENE, GAUS CONCURRED IN THE EMBASSY'S ASSESSMENT THAT THERE IS NO SERIOUS CRISIS AT THE PRESENT TIME. PEOPLE ARE DISCONTENT. THE ECONOMY HAS PROBLEMS, BUT IT IS NOWHERE NEAR A CATASTROPHE AND IS NOT LIKELY TO BECOME CATASTROPHIC. (HE MADE THESE REMARKS BEFORE READING THE 1976 PLAN FULFILLMENT REPORT). INTELLECTUAL DISCONTENT IS NOWHERE NEAR THAT IN POLAND OR CZECHOSLOVAKIA. WHILE THE GENERAL SITUATION IS NOT NECESSARILY GOOD, HE IS OF THE VIEW THAT RECENT MEASURES BY THE REGIME (ACCESS CONTROL, THE BIERMANN OUSTER, ETC) ARE A CASE OF "OVERKILL", AND HE ATTRIBUTES PART OF THE REASON FOR THIS TO THE PROPOSITION THAT EAST BLOC LEADERS IN GENERAL DO NOT KNOW HOW TO COPE WITH SUFFICIENT SUBTLETY WITH CRISIS AND RULING IN CRISIS SITUATIONS.

12. COMMENT: GAUS ASKED THAT HIS COMMENT NOT BE SPREAD WIDE, SINCE THEY TOUCH ON SENSITIVE FRG DOMESTIC CONSIDERATIONS AND INDIRECTLY ON INNER PARTY POLITICS AND PERSONALITIES. AS HIS REMARKS INDICATE, HE REMAINS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE STATE OF FRG/GDR RELATIONS AND BELIEVES THAT MISTAKES COULD EASILY BE MADE ON BOTH SIDES THAT WILL ONLY WORSEN THE SITUATION. WE HAVE NOTED THE SHIFT IN GDR MEDIA TREATMENT OF THE PERMRP. MEDIA ATTENTION TO THE PERMRPE HAS BEEN ABSENT FOR

SEVERAL DAYS, PRESUMABLY BECAUSE THE REGIME THINKS IT
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HAS MADE ITS POINT ON THIS PARTICULAR ISSUE AND THAT
THE NEXT MOVE IS UP TO THE FRG. THERE IS, AT THE SAME
TIME, A RUMOR FLOATING AROUND EAST BERLIN THAT THE
REGIME WILL SHORTLY OPEN AN OFFICE TO WHICH EAST
GERMANS MUST APPLY FOR PERMISSION TO VISIT FOREIGN
EMBASSIES.

13. GAUS HAD AN INTERVIEW WITH SPIEGEL JANUARY 26
IN WHICH HE PRESUMABLY WOULD TRY TO SIGNAL BOTH SIDES TO
TAKE A MORE REALISTIC APPRECIATION OF EACH OTHERS'
PROBLEM/POSITIONS IN ORDER TO AVOID A FURTHER DETERIORATION
OF RELATIONS, WHICH HE SEES TO BE IN NO ONE'S INTEREST.
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